

the following September the whole of Manchuria was in the hands of the aggressor. The measured condemnation by the Lytton Report was confirmed by a unanimous vote of the Assembly, and the breaker of the Covenant resigned. No state, however, proposed either military or economic sanctions, and the League merely refused to recognize changes effected in violation of treaty obligations.

Though British opinion was shocked at the action of a Power which was not only an original, member of the League but a permanent member of the Council, the Coalition Government formed in the autumn of 1931 played for safety. Japan had broken the Covenant, the Washington Nine-Power

Treaty, and the Pact of Paris ; yet it was generally agreed that nothing could be done without the co-operation of the United States, whose commercial relations with Japan were more important than ours. Nowhere was greater sympathy felt for the reforming efforts of Young China than in America.

Mr. Stimson took the lead in the policy of non-recognition of illegal conquests which was followed at Geneva, but even he felt unable to do more. Everyone knew that a world-wide

boycott of Japan's exports would have crippled her power and perhaps rescued Manchuria from her grip ; but it might also have led her to hit back, and no Power was willing to run the risk of war against a nation so inaccessible and so strong.

Sir John Simon was sharply criticized in various quarters for his cool acceptance of a gross breach of the Covenant and Mr. Stimson was disappointed at his attitude; yet most Englishmen

agreed that we could do nothing effective if America declined to move. Inaction, however, while avoiding danger at the moment, was bound to increase the perils of the future by encouraging aggression elsewhere. The

alternative to collective security is anarchy. The unopposed seizure of Manchuria opened a new and sinister chapter in the history of Asia, Africa and Europe. The lull which followed the Great War was over. The League was powerless, for its members declined to play up. The world was becoming safe for aggressors provided that the victim was weak; and neutrals, greedy for orders, were only too ready to supply the munitions and materials needed for the success of a criminal enterprise*

XII. DISARMAMENT AND REPARATIONS

A third blow to recovery was struck by the fiasco of the Disarmament Conference. Years of preliminary discussion